

# BEIJING

**DAVID EIMER** 

### Beijing Encounter

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### **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

### Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues or the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote areas of interest — for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start evolution.

### Prices

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### **DAVID EIMER**

David first came to China in 1988, when both Westerners and cars were in short supply. After studying law, he abandoned the idea of becoming a barrister for a career as a freelance journalist. That took him from London to LA for five years, where he wrote for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Back in London, he returned to China for the first time in 14 years and found a country that had changed beyond almost all recognition. Subsequent visits confirmed his belief that China was the most exciting country in the world, and



in early 2005 he moved to Beijing and took up residence in a *hutong* in Dongcheng district and contributes to UK and Hong Kong publications. He has co-authored the last two editions of the *Beijing* guide for Lonely Planet and worked on the *Shanghai* and *China* guidebooks.

### **DAVID'S THANKS**

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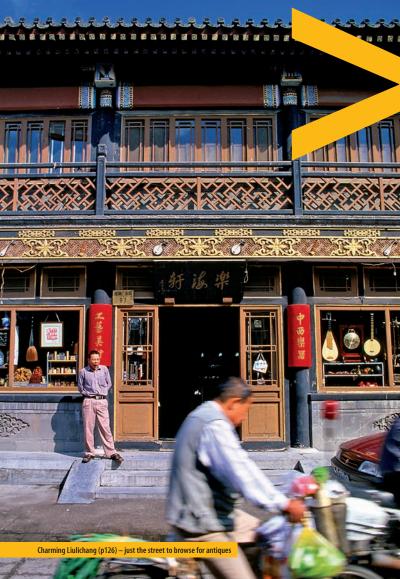
### THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Greg Elms has contributed to Lonely Planet for over 15 years. Armed with a Bachelor of Arts in Photography, Greg was a photographer's assistant before embarking on a travel odyssey until he eventually settled down to a freelance career in Melbourne.

**Our readers** Many thanks to the travellers who wrote to us with helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes: Howard Bull, Bob Saltzstein, Dana Schindel, Brooklyn Storme, Emanuela Tasinato.

Cover photograph A woman on her phone — today's China is a well-blended mix of the traditional and the modern, Peter Beck/Corbis. Internal photographs by David Eimer p43, p58, p62, p75, p83, p103. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images and Greg Elms except those by Jinghui Caj p61; 8bb Charlton p69; Krzysztof Dydynski p114; Lee Foster p21; John Hay p4; Richard I'Anson p128; Ray Laskowitz p27, p100, p121; Keren Su p119, p132; Phil Weymouth p30 (top), p135; Lawrie Williams p25; Rodney Zandbergs p130.

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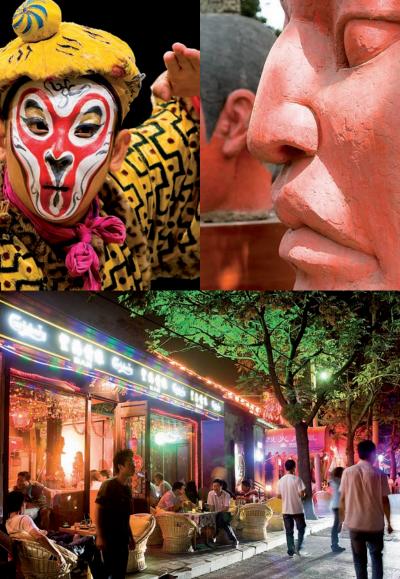
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## THIS IS BEIJING

Capital of the country everyone's talking about, Beijing is a dynamic clash of the ancient and the modern. Steeped in history it might be, but Beijing redefines and reinvents itself while other cities are content to rest on their laurels.

If the pace of change in Beijing leaves its almost 17 million residents breathless, then visitors to the city are frequently left open-mouthed by its contrasts. Stunning historical sights rub shoulders with cutting-edge architecture, while serene temples coexist with buzzing nightspots. And if that wasn't enough, Beijing is home to Asia's most exciting art scene, as well as upwards of 60,000 restaurants offering the very best of China's many cuisines.

More than anything, though, there's a confidence to Beijing now – a very real sense that this once conservative capital is enjoying the time of its life. Its inhabitants know that better than anyone. Beijingers have always believed they're living at the centre of the world; now, they really are. Always direct and never short of something to say and joke about, the locals are fiercely proud of their city and are no longer fazed or left tongue-tied by the increasing numbers of foreigners who have come to see what all the fuss is about.

Nevertheless, for all the new buildings, the improvements to infrastructure and the dramatic rise in living standards, Beijing remains a work in progress. Pollution is still an issue, no longer caused by heavy industry but by the 1000 new cars that take to the roads every day. And constant change brings its own stresses, as neighbourhoods are overhauled and once familiar landmarks disappear. Many people, too, have failed to prosper from the booming local economy.

But for all its inequalities, Beijing positively seethes with energy and optimism. There's nowhere else on the planet where you can see history being made on this scale, so grab the chance while you can.

**Top left** Peking Opera performance, Chaoyang Theatre (p64) **Top right** Artworks are on display indoors and out, in the Dashanzi Art District (p16) **Bottom** Every night is a good night at the restaurant strips by the lakes of Houhai (p88)